

# **Children and Youth**

## **Program Action Plan - 2016-2017**

### **Brittany Schofield**

Children and Youth per the 2014-2019 Centennial Strategic Plan – By protecting, caring for, and supporting children and youth, particularly those of veterans and military families. American Legion Auxiliary members fulfill our brand promise (Goal 5) of being community leaders and responsible American citizens while caring for military families. In doing so, we are building a future membership base (Goal 1) among our target demographic – military families.

#### **What is this program and why do we have it?**

The Children and Youth Program emphasizes protecting, caring for and supporting children and youth, particularly those of veterans' and military families.

#### **What can you do?**

##### **1. Support Children and Youth in your Community**

- **“Star Spangled Kids”**. This is an ALA program to educate children and youth on the history of the United States from the aspect of patriotism, Americanism and the U.S. Constitution.
- **Youth Hero Awards/Good Deed Awards**: This is an ALA program to recognize youth who demonstrate a heroic act of physical valor or who exemplify community service in action.
- **Josh Dogs**. An American Legion Family alliance, Josh is a plush dog and accompanying storybook used to help ease the anxiety of being sick when in the hospital.
- **April is the American Legion’s Children and Youth Month**
- **Ideas for the Member:**
  - Offer to make a **“Star Spangled”** presentation to your local school(s). Invite post members to help students learn how their military service was meaningful in defending the U.S. Constitution. Refer to the *“How to Promote Star Spangled Kids”* Sheet.
  - Contact local high schools to invite them to encourage their students to use their knowledge of the U.S. Constitution by participating in the **American Legion Oratorical Contest**. Refer to [www.legion.org](http://www.legion.org) for information on the Oratorical Contest.
  - Monitor newspapers, TV, social media sites and neighborhoods for children and youth who have performed a heroic act of physical valor, such as performing CPR, helping evacuate in the event of a fire, calling 911 for an emergency, etc. Work with your unit to nominate them for a **Youth Hero/Good Deed Award**.
  - Contact local schools, churches and youth groups to make them aware of the **Youth Hero/Good Deed Awards**. Make sure to leave Unit contact information.
  - Identify children in your community who may be or are facing hospitalization for the first time and who may benefit from a Josh and Friends dog and book.
  - Collect items and bags for **“Dignity Bags”**. Refer to the *“How to Promote Special Projects”* sheets and the *“Dignity Bag Checklist”*.
  - Purchase stuffed animals for a **“Stuffed with Love”** project.
  - Refer to the *“How to Promote Special Projects”* sheets

- **Ideas for the Unit:**
  - Create a Unit Citizenship Award for children and youth who have learned the ideals of the U.S. Constitution.
  - Share a constitutional fact each month in the Unit newsletter, the newspaper editorial and/or on social media.
  - Host a game night to highlight the U.S. Constitution and Patriotism.
  - Make up a game show for the children to participate in and answer questions pertaining to the U.S. Constitution then award prizes to the winners.
  - Involve the children with folding pocket flags
  - Distribute informational material about the American Legion Family and how to join.
  - Print and distribute pocket constitutions to school children. Refer to the “*How to Promote Star Spangled Kids*” sheet.
  - Distribute patriotic coloring book pages for children in primary grades.
  - Once a child has been identified as a Youth Hero/Good Deed applicant, complete the nomination form. See the **Youth Hero/Good Deed** nomination form. Plan to submit the name of the child. Have the form signed by two Unit members, and then submit the form to your Department Secretary.
  - When a **Youth Hero/Good Deed Award** is approved, contact local media, community leaders, school leaders and the child’s parents and plan for a public presentation of the award.
  - Plan a special celebration of children during the month of April in honor of Children and Youth Month at the post.
  - Assemble and distribute bags for the “Dignity Bags” project. Refer to the “*How to Promote Special Projects*” sheets and the “*Dignity Bags Checklist*”.
  - Distribute stuffed animals to local ambulance facilities as part of the “Stuffed with Love Project”. Refer to the “*How to Promote Special Projects*” sheets.
  - Host a dinner, game night, community fair, etc. that will bring military and non-military families together.
  - Involve the Juniors!

## 2. Support Military Children and Youth

- **Kids of Deployed are Heroes 2 (K2H2):** This is a recognition program for military children who experience extended separation from their military parent or parents.
- **GI Josh:** An American Legion Family alliance, GI Josh is a plush dog and accompanying storybook used to help ease separation fears for the military children.
- **April is the Month of the Military Child**
- Conduct a joint ceremony as a Legion Family on the Military Child Table Setting.
- **Ideas for the Member:**
  - Volunteer at a Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS) camp program.
  - Volunteer at a Family Readiness Group event where K2H2 “I’m a Hero 2” buttons/stickers can be distributed.
  - Give a GI Josh to the child of a deployed service member.
  - Wear purple on April 15 in honor of Purple Up! For Military Kids day.
    - Take pictures
    - Post pictures to social media and use the hashtag #ALAPurpleUp

**In Indiana** - Purchase items from the Thirty-One fundraiser to fulfill a Soldier’s child’s wish list  
- Refer to the Thirty-One fundraiser flyer

- **Ideas for the Unit:**
  - Host a dinner, game night, community fair, etc. that will bring military and non-military families together.
  - Host a K2H2 celebration with recognition buttons/stickers to let military kids know we appreciate their sacrifices. Refer to the “*How to Conduct a Kids of Deployed are Heroes 2*” program.
  - Support GI Josh – Identify military children who may have a parent or sibling deploying.
  - Plan a special celebration of military children during April in honor of the Month of the Military Child.
  - Encourage members to wear purple on April 15<sup>th</sup> in honor of Purple Up! For Military Kids day.
  - Involve the Juniors!

### 3. Support Veterans’ Children and Youth

#### a. Homeless Veterans’ Children

- b. *Klinger, a Story of Honor and Hope* – Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS) is affiliated with the American Legion Family.

- **Ideas for the Member:**

- Contact your local churches, homeless shelters and food pantries to identify homeless veterans’ children. Ask what their specific needs are, and offer them your service as an ALA member.
- Collect items and bags for “Project Night” Night.
  - Refer to the “*How to Promote Special Projects*” sheets
- Contact your local news sources (newspaper, community television, community websites and social media accounts) and town council. Offer to give a presentation about you and your Unit’s work for homeless veterans and their children.
- Contact your voluntary service representatives at the Veterans Affairs Medical Center. Offer to work with them to help meet the needs of children of homeless veterans who come to the VMAC.
- Contact local schools to access their need for supplies and extra clothes for homeless children. Offer to supply items as needed.
- Volunteer at a TAPS camp program.

- **Ideas for the Unit:**

- Train unit members to be a resource for front-line agencies who receive requests for help.
- Contact local schools to access their need for supplies and extra clothes for homeless children. Offer to supply items as needed.
- Host a clothes drive to collect gently used clothes from Legion Family members and others in the community.
- Assemble and distribute bags for “Project Night” Night.
- Contact your post service officer to offer help with the needs of children for veterans who need financial help (The American Legion – Temporary Financial Assistance)
- Help raise awareness for the needs of homeless children in your community by sharing unit activities on the unit website, social media pages and newsletters.

- Purchase the book, *Klinger, a Story of Honor and Hope*, from TAPS with the companion plush horse for children who are grieving the loss of a military parent or loved one.
- Involve the Juniors!

#### **4. Provide financial assistance to the American Legion Child Welfare Foundation.**

The Liaison to the American Legion Child Welfare Foundation and the 2014-2019 Centennial Strategic Plan – Dedicated to the betterment of all children. Legion Family members who raise funds and awards grants through the Child Welfare Foundation build brand loyalty. (Goal 5)

The highest priority of the Child Welfare Foundation (CFW) is to provide other nonprofit organizations a means to educate the public about the needs of children across the nation. It is an exceptional gift for exceptional children. Not all American children grow up inside the comfortable definition of normal childhood development. For thousands, each day is a challenge marked by pain, prayer and perseverance. Many of these youngsters require specialized care. To overcome their obstacles, they need help from you and the American Legion Child Welfare Foundation.

##### **• Ideas for the Member:**

- Participate in any CWF fundraisers sponsored by your unit or department.
- Become a unit chairman to coordinate fundraising activities.
- Ask friends and family members to support the CWF.
- Fill bacon bookmarks with dimes
- Collect change in piggy banks
- For your personal donations to be recognized toward our unit for The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation Awards, please request donation envelopes by emailing [admin@cwf-inc.org](mailto:admin@cwf-inc.org) or by calling 317-630-1202, or go to [www.cwf-inc.org](http://www.cwf-inc.org) to donate online or to print a donation form to mail.

##### **• Ideas for the Unit:**

- Appoint a unit chairman to coordinate fundraising activities
- Encourage your unit to work towards winning 100% Per Capita Banner for donating \$1.00 per member to the Child Welfare Foundation. For more information look under the awards below.
- Provide members with a small bag/box/bank and ask them to put their change in the bag every Friday. Bring the container filled with coins at the final meeting of the year.
- Play games during unit meetings to raise money. Some ideas include, but are not limited to:
  - “10 Cents a Door” – Take a cute container to the meeting and ask each member to drop a dime in the container for every door in their house.
  - B-I-N-G-O! – Play four games for a quarter a game after the meeting. The winner of each game receives half of the proceeds, and the other half goes to the Child Welfare Foundation.
  - Holiday Exchange – Rather than exchange gifts, take a holiday stocking to the meeting and fill it with money.
  - 50/50 Raffle – proceeds will add to your Child Welfare Foundation donations.

- “A Penny an Inch” – Collect a penny for each inch of a member’s height. Be prepared! Take a measuring tape to the meeting just in case someone doesn’t know how tall they are.
- “A Nickel a Clasp” – Collect a nickel for every button, belt, tie, zipper, hook and eye, snap, etc. (remember the bra) that members have on their attire.
- If your unit participates in a fish fry or another dinner for your community, donate part of the proceeds to Child Welfare Foundation.
- Pair up with a local school and see if you can hold a tailgate party in the parking lot before a football or baseball game. Sell hamburgers and hotdogs and give part of the proceeds to Child Welfare Foundation. Be sure to have information about the American Legion Family on hand to pass out, including membership applications. Be sure to wear your ALA attire!
- Hold a garage sale. Ask for members to donate items and the proceeds of the items can be donated to Child Welfare Foundation.
- Share fundraising ideas with other Units and Districts.
- Involve the Juniors!
- Include reminders to donate to CWF in newsletters, on websites and on social media.
- For your unit donations to be eligible for the American Legion Child Welfare Foundation Awards, please request donation envelopes by emailing [admin@cwf-inc.org](mailto:admin@cwf-inc.org) or by calling 317-630-1202.

## **Children and Youth Reporting**

### **Mid-Year Reports**

- Each **Unit Chairman** shall submit a narrative report to your District Chairman by **December 1, 2016**.
- Each **District Chairman** shall submit a narrative report to the Department Chairman by **December 15, 2016**. Combine the Unit reports and report everything the Units are doing to work collaboratively with the American Legion for direct and sponsor programs and services that provide care and protection for our nation’s children especially those of our military and veterans.

### **Annual Reports**

- Each **Unit Chairman** shall submit a **narrative report** along with your **Annual Report Form** to your District Chairman by **April 15, 2017**.
- Each **District Chairman** shall submit a **narrative report** along with your **Annual Report form** to the Department Chairman no later than **May 1, 2017**.

### **Narrative Reporting Guidelines**

**As part of your narrative report, please include answers to the following questions:**

1. How did your unit(s) promote “Start Spangled Kids,” educating children and youth about the U.S. Constitution from the aspect of patriotism and Americanism?
2. How did your unit(s) promote the Youth Hero/Good Deed Award?
3. What success stories do you have regarding support for military or homeless veterans’ children?
4. What success stories do you have regarding support for other children?
5. How did your unit(s) promote fundraising for the Child Welfare Foundation?

## **National Awards:**

### **Youth Hero Award**

**Type of Award:** Youth Hero Medal and Citation

**Presented to:** Youth under 18 years of age who have performed a heroic act of physical valor.

#### **Materials and guidelines:**

- Complete the Youth Hero and Good Deed Award Nomination Form and mail it to the **Department Secretary**, who certifies, then mails the applications directly to National Headquarters. (Please, members/units **do not** mail applications directly to National Headquarters.)
- The award certificate, signed by the National President, and Youth Hero Award medal will be returned to the unit to be presented on behalf of the national organization.
- Please be sure to notify the Department Children and Youth Chairman that a Youth in your area received this award.

### **Good Deed Award**

**Type of Award:** Citation

**Presented to:** Youth under 18 years of age who are great examples of community service in action

#### **Materials and guidelines:**

- Complete the Youth Hero and Good Deed Award Nomination Form and mail it to the **Department Secretary**, who certifies, then mails the application to National Headquarters. (Please, members/units **do not** mail applications directly to National Headquarters.)
- The award certificate, signed by the National President, and the Youth Hero Award medal will be returned to the unit to be presented on behalf of the national organization.
- Please be sure to notify the Department Children and Youth Chairman that a Youth in your area received this award.

**Unit Award:** Outstanding Unit Children and Youth program

**Type of Award:** Engraved Plaque

**Presented to:** One Unit in each division (5 overall awards)

#### **Materials and guidelines:**

- Awarded to the unit in each division with the most outstanding Children and Youth program.
- Narrative not to exceed 1,000 words. Include specific examples of how your unit worked the Children and Youth program.
- May include pictures, news articles, news releases, etc.
- Attach an award cover sheet, including the name of the award, as well as the name and contact information for the Department and the Unit Children and Youth Chairman.
- Deadline May 15, 2017.
- Send to the National Division Chairman Julia Moore, PO Box 21, Lena, IL 61048  
Cell: (815) 369-4784; [Jamcps54@yahoo.com](mailto:Jamcps54@yahoo.com)

**Unit Award:** Supporting Military Children Unit Award

**Type of Award:** Citation Plaque

**Presented To:** One Unit chairman in each division (5 overall awards)

**Materials and guidelines:**

- Awarded to the unit chairman in each division with the best program supporting military children.
- Narrative not to exceed 1,000 words.
- May include pictures, news articles, news releases, etc.
- Attach an award cover sheet, including the name of the award, as well as the name and contact information for Department and the Unit Children and Youth Chairman.
- Deadline May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2017
- Send to the National Division Chairman Julie Moore  
PO Box 21, Lena, IL 61048  
Cell: (815) 369-4784  
[Jamcps54@yahoo.com](mailto:Jamcps54@yahoo.com)

**Unit Award:** Star Spangled Kids Unit Award

**Type of Award:** Citation Plaque

**Presented To:** One unit chairman in each division (5 overall awards)

**Materials and guidelines:**

- Awarded to the unit chairman in each division for the most outstanding program promoting Star Spangled Kids.
- Narrative not to exceed 1,000 words. Include specific examples of Star Spangled Kids activities and programs.
- May include pictures, news articles, news releases, etc.
- Attach an award cover sheet, including the name of the award, as well as the name and contact information for Department and the Unit Children and Youth Chairman.
- Deadline May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2017
- Send to the National Division Chairman Julie Moore  
PO Box 21, Lena, IL 61048  
Cell: (815) 369-4784  
[Jamcps54@yahoo.com](mailto:Jamcps54@yahoo.com)

**Unit Award:** “Children First” Gift Club

**Type of Award:** Plaque

**Presented to:** Units

**Materials and guidelines:**

- Presented for their cumulative donations to The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation during the contribution year (June 1, 2016 through May 31, 2017).
- Guardian Level - \$1,000
- Advocate Level - \$750
- Caretaker Level - \$500

**Unit Award:** 100% Per Capita Banner Program

**Type of Award:** Banner

**Presented to:** Units

**Materials and guidelines:**

- Presented to units donating at least one dollar for each member to the American Legion Child Welfare Foundation during the contribution year (June 1, 2016 through May 31, 2017).
- Application form can be found at [www.cwf-inc.org](http://www.cwf-inc.org)

**Member Award:** “Cornerstone” Gift Club

**Type of Award:** Pin

**Presented to:** Members

**Materials and guidelines:**

- Presented for their cumulative donations to the American Legion Child Welfare Foundation during the contribution year (June 1, 2016 through May 31, 2017).
- Foundation Ambassadors - \$1,000
- President’s Circle - \$500
- Foundation Partners - \$250
- Century Club - \$100

**Department Awards:**

- **Irma Ward Monetary Award** to the Unit reporting best year round program.
- **Rosey Newman Monetary Award** to the Unit with the largest percentage of contributions to the National Child Welfare Foundation

**Department Chairman Personal Awards:**

- To the Unit that worked the best project supporting our children alongside our Legion Family (The American Legion, Sons of the American Legion, and Legion Riders).
- To the District with the largest contributions to the National Child Welfare Foundation.
- To the District that collects the most pop tabs.
- To the Unit over 250 members that collects the most pop tabs.
- To the Unit less than 250 members that collects the most pop tabs.
- To the Junior Unit with the best project supporting our Military Children.

Department and Personal Awards will be presented at Department Convention – July 2017.

**Additional Resources:**

- The American Legion Children & Youth programs: [www.legion.org/programs](http://www.legion.org/programs)
- The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation: [www.legion.org/cwf](http://www.legion.org/cwf)
- Josh and Friends (American Legion Family alliance): [www.joshandfriends.com](http://www.joshandfriends.com)
- Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (an American Legion Child Welfare Foundation grant recipient for *Klinger*): [www.taps.org](http://www.taps.org)
- Print Pocket Constitution for school children: [www.constitutionbooklet.com](http://www.constitutionbooklet.com)
- Military Child Education Coalition: [www.militarychild.org](http://www.militarychild.org)
- “I’m a Hero 2” stickers template and instructions can be found on the Children & Youth program page at [www.ALForVeterans.org](http://www.ALForVeterans.org)



- See Children & Youth program page at [www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org) for additional resources.
- The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation: [www.cwf-inc.org](http://www.cwf-inc.org)
- The Liaison to Child Welfare Foundation page at [www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org)
- Project Night Night: [www.projectnightnight.org](http://www.projectnightnight.org)

The Children and Youth Program is a rewarding program that recognizes and assists Children and Youth in your community. If you have any questions, be sure to contact me by phone or email so I may provide answers to you as quickly as possible. Looking forward to a great year!

**Brittany Schofield, Department Children and Youth Chairman**

**624 West Cleveland Street**

**Shelburn, IN 47879**

**812-243-0458**

**[blmckain@gmail.com](mailto:blmckain@gmail.com)**

**[Brittany.schofield@duke-energy.com](mailto:Brittany.schofield@duke-energy.com)**